

WAS MALENKOV BEHIND THE ANTI-SEMITIC PLOT?

The Doctors' Frame-up and Its Reversal

FRANZ BORKENAU

THE manner of the latest shift on anti-Semitism by the Soviet regime seems to confirm what a few close observers had alerted opinion to even prior to the Prague trial—that the key to the mystery of the intensification of official Communist anti-Semitism, both in Russia and the satellites, lay in the intrigue around the sudden death of Andrei Alexandrovitch Zhdanov on August 31, 1948.

It was immediately rumored that Zhdanov, regarded as Stalin's heir apparent, had been murdered. Four and a half years later, on January 13, 1953, Moscow announced that nine doctors, six of them Jewish, had "confessed" to the crime, done—they said—on behalf of Zionism and at the orders of the American intelligence service. It was this news that gave the signal for the beginning of the furious anti-Semitic campaign—camou-

FROM its inception, many of the keenest political writers on Soviet affairs were convinced that the new official anti-Semitism was connected with some power intrigue within the regime, as well as with a turn in relations with the world outside. Speculation, as always, had to do what it could with the bits and pieces breaking through the Iron Curtain; and, with the dramatic reversal on the "doctor's plot," master-minding has been fast and furious. FRANZ BORKENAU would be the first to admit the large element of speculation involved in the analysis he offers here. Withal, in view of his warning, in a German newspaper a few weeks before Stalin's death, that the arrest of the Kremlin medical staff meant that Stalin's own life was probably in danger, informed opinion here and abroad will follow this analysis with keen attentiveness, and, we daresay, profit. Mr. Borkenau is author of a history of the Communist International, and of *The Spanish Cockpit*. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "The Chances of a Mao-Stalin Rift" (August 1952).

flaged as "anti-Zionism"—inside the USSR.

Two and a half months passed. Stalin had died meanwhile, and Georgi Malenkov become his ostensible successor. Then it was announced from Moscow that the nine physicians—and six more whose arrest had not been made public before—were being released because it had been discovered they were the victims of a frame-up, and now their accusers were to be punished instead. Soviet propaganda itself during the same period had made a turn of 180 degrees and was now loudly professing understanding and peace with the West, including even the United States. From this some observers have drawn the conclusions that it was the friends of Zhdanov, himself suspected of anti-Semitism, who were responsible for the campaign against the Jews—and that Malenkov, once he achieved power, had countered the stroke of his former rival's clique.

The truth, however, more likely runs in quite another direction. Let us go back a little in time.

THE focus of the contending ambitions of Zhdanov and Malenkov had been the leadership of the Secretariat of the Russian Communist party's Central Committee. In 1946 Malenkov had been replaced in that post by Zhdanov, only to regain it almost immediately after the latter's death two years later.

It was then that Soviet anti-Semitism first declared itself openly and officially. In October or November 1948 General Antonov, Jewish chief of staff of the Red Army, was supplanted by General Shtemenko, a Gentile. The six leading Yiddish writers of the Soviet Union were arrested and subsequently disappeared. The cult that had formed around the memory of Simon Mik-

hoels, the famous Jewish actor and community leader who had died earlier that year, was suddenly hushed, and his name not again mentioned officially until it appeared in the indictment of the nine doctors. At the same time the Yiddish newspaper *Einigkeit*, the Yiddish theater in Moscow, and a number of other Jewish institutional activities were all suspended. Recognition of the Jews in the USSR as a national minority was withdrawn.

Except perhaps for Antonov's demotion, all this was public knowledge. What was not sufficiently remarked, however, was how close together all these steps against the Jews came in time—and, above all, how closely they followed upon Zhdanov's death and Malenkov's assumption of his vacated post.

As evidence that Zhdanov was anti-Semitic, the campaign he started against "cosmopolitanism" is usually cited. But that campaign was simply part of Zhdanov's general anti-Western line—his endeavor to wipe out the liberal and Westernizing tendencies that had been awakened in Russia by the wartime alliance with Britain and America—and its most prominent victims were not Jews, but ethnic Russians like Zoshchenko, the satirical writer, and Shostakovich, the composer. After Zhdanov's death, however, certain seemingly small verbal changes were made in his slogans. But they were of the kind that always have great importance in official Soviet pronouncements. Now the adjective "homeless," never applied before 1949, was added to "cosmopolitan," which left no doubt that Jews were meant. Thus it would seem to be Malenkov who made Jew-baiting official policy. This would confirm the persistent rumor that it was he who was the leading instigator of anti-Semitism in the Kremlin before Stalin's death.

Malenkov was at one with Zhdanov in hostility to the West—but anti-Westernism can lead to divergent and contradictory forms of concrete political action. Zhdanov's anti-Westernism was strongly colored by Leninist tradition; and it was he who promoted, founded, and bossed the Cominform, whose chief mission it was to reverse the policy

of cooperation with liberal and democratic elements that most of the Communist parties of the West, and some in East Europe, had carried over from the days of wartime underground resistance. To effect this change, Zhdanov counted on the help of a number of Communist leaders in the satellite countries, foremost among whom was Tito. No longer deeming it necessary to observe that caution towards the West which the menace of Nazi Germany had imposed on Soviet leadership, Zhdanov strove to revive the Leninist faith in world revolution among the various Communist parties. A new international command was to be created that would lead the faithful to victory in the third world war that was just around the corner.

This was the tenor of Zhdanov's acts as Cominform leader, and also of a famous pamphlet by his closest friend, Voznesensky, arguing that the war potential of the Communist world was already far superior to the West's. (Malenkov rejected this absurd view, and so in the end did Stalin.) What it is important to notice in this context, however, is that such an internationalist, world-revolutionary line could not have been made compatible with anti-Semitism.

THERE is more positive evidence of Zhdanov's attitude. He relied greatly on the support of leaders of Jewish origin in the struggles for power that took place inside many of the satellite Communist parties—and particularly in Czechoslovakia, where the putsch of February 1948 represented the victory of party-secretary Slansky's group over that of the late Klement Gottwald. Gottwald is known to have opposed the coup (Douglas Hyde, ex-editor of the London *Daily Worker*, has supplied details to confirm this), holding that Communism could come to power in Czechoslovakia by peaceful means. After the Prague "revolution," for which Zhdanov himself is said to have given the signal, Gottwald felt hardly safer than President Benes: and in the life-and-death struggle that ensued between his group and Slansky's, most of whom were Jewish as well as pro-Zhdanov, he and his follow-

ers became ever more openly anti-Semitic. There were parallel, if less spectacular, anti-Semitic developments in other satellites.

Inside Russia herself, the *Zhdanovshchina*, or anti-Western campaign, did not strike any prominent Jews. Of course, there were any number of anti-Jewish administrative pinpricks, but to take these as evidence of a deliberate anti-Semitic policy on the top levels would require more belief than is justified in the official myth of monolithic Communist unity. There are deep differences within the Soviet leadership, and "deviating" subordinates often have the *sub rosa* backing of highly placed persons who are in disagreement with the official line and even ready to sabotage it.

The case of the late Simon Mikhoels is an example. He was the only deceased person whose name appeared in the list of the accused in the Moscow "doctors' plot" (one of these doctors appears to have been a brother of his). During the war, and also during the subsequent short-lived honeymoon with Israel, Mikhoels—whose real name was Vovsi and who had won fame as an actor and a leader of the Jewish community inside Russia—was sent abroad on important Soviet missions. Early in 1948 he went on a trip to Minsk from which he did not return. His death was announced some time later, but with no details. Obviously he had met a violent end, and it was equally obvious that no one was being punished for it. It was rumored that he had been killed by pro-Nazi partisans still at large in White Russia; but the suspicion grew that he had really been assassinated with official connivance.

"Official" in this connection, however, was an ambiguous term. The Soviet Union was to continue to show friendliness towards Israel for some time afterwards; this was part of official policy, and it is highly improbable that those controlling that policy should have winked at the murder of one of the chief spokesmen of Soviet-Israeli friendship. Rather, the guilty parties are to be sought among those elements in the top leadership who were against Jews in

general and Israel in particular, but who were not then determining the official line. They only came to power later on, after Zhdanov's death. Further support for this hypothesis is supplied by the fact that Mikhoels' memory was made practically the object of an official cult during the few more months that Zhdanov remained alive, and that only Malenkov's climb back to power put a stop to it.

The whole Mikhoels episode gives one a glimpse of the sort of dissension that divides the Kremlin. Even five years ago it could lead to the spilling of blood. And always it had, and still has, direct implications for Soviet foreign policy. (Molotov, then as now head of the Foreign Ministry, agreed with Zhdanov on the necessity of breaking with the West, though it is doubtful whether he wanted as aggressive a policy as the latter. As a rule, however, he formed a common bloc with Zhdanov and Voznesensky inside the Politburo, and it is significant that the phase of amity with Israel coincided with the short period during which the Zhdanov-Voznesensky-Molotov bloc was on top in the Kremlin.)

IT SHOULD be plain, then, that Zhdanov's supposed anti-Semitism does not square with the known facts. Just as little does the hypothesis that holds recent Soviet anti-Semitism to be a response to popular feeling surviving from the time of the czars.

It would be equally wrong to suppose that the anti-Semitism of Malenkov and his group was a mere matter of personal prejudice. The motivation was definitely political, and had its roots in the nature and general development of the Soviet social order.

Since at least 1919 the presence of a new upper class in Russia has been a prime factor in every struggle inside the Communist party of that country. One part of this new class—the party hierarchy and the officials of the secret police—wields exclusive political power. The other part—the higher-ranking army officers, the members of the civil administration, the managers of industry and finance—though indispensable, lacks political

voice. The first has developed into a dominant, but increasingly insulated, sub-class of party bureaucrats and police officials who bear down hard on the rest of the population; the other section of the upper class, made up of "technocrats"—generals, administrators, and factory bosses—strains unceasingly against this monopoly of political power that excludes themselves.

These stresses and strains also have their national, or ethnic, side, as class differences in Eastern Europe have had since time immemorial. This serves further to embitter antagonisms provoked by the Communist restratification of society. But ethnic, and racial, issues are less at stake in the case of the party as such than in that of the secret police. The Soviet secret police has from the very beginning always recruited a large proportion of its personnel from "allogenes," the border or minority peoples of the old czarist empire—Letts, Jews, and Poles at first, then Caucasians. And the power of that police, whether called the Cheka, GPU, NKVD, or MGB, has always been felt by large sections of Soviet citizenry as a power wielded by outsiders over "true" Russians.

Organized physical force counts for more in a totalitarian society than in most other kinds—as we already saw with Hitler's Germany. In the USSR, the secret police monopolizes it on the "party side," the army on the "non-party side." Though party crises in the Soviet Union have usually looked from the outside like struggles between purely party factions, actually antagonisms between the army and the secret police have almost always played some role. And what has always been at issue underneath is who was to have the upper hand in terms of physical force.

FOR decades the secret police has had that upper hand, unquestionably. But it never has quite managed to achieve a position of complete security. During the civil war in the early days of the Soviet regime, officers and even generals from the czarist army who had sided with the Bolsheviks—and who were all the more valuable to them because

so few—were subjected to never-ending humiliations and bullying by police agents in the guise of political commissars who were almost invariably non-Russian, and more often than not incompetent and grotesquely rude. At a very early date, before there was any question of restricting the powers of the police in civilian life, concessions had to be made to the Red Army's resentment of the GPU: the political commissars were withdrawn in 1926, and during the next ten years the army was the only place in Russian life that could offer a young man a real career in which he did not have to worry unduly about being arrested or executed. But the secret police, renamed the NKVD, got its revenge when the Great Purge started in 1936. The political commissars were brought back into the army, and Commander-in-Chief Tukhachevsky, almost his entire staff, and no less than 30,000 commissioned officers were shot.

Stalin, in his cunning, had seen to it that the political commissars attached to the army were this time, too, preponderantly "allogene"—in order to narrow the risk of any spontaneous sympathy between them and the officers, who were mostly Russian. And at the head of the political administration of the Red Army, Stalin had put Mekhlis, a Jew, to organize the massacre.

A few weeks after the official news of the "doctors' plot" came out in Moscow, Mekhlis suddenly died. Whatever the real cause of his death, the leaders of the Russian army had reason to see in it a blow struck for their side by the anti-Semitic faction in the party. Since the days of the 1936 purge, anti-Semitism in the army had grown fat on hatred of the NKVD, which was identified with Mekhlis, the Jew, in particular, and with Jews and outsiders in general. A step against Jews by any party faction was therefore to be seen as a bid to the army's anti-Semites for support against the secret police. Those persons in the Kremlin who had framed the doctors and announced Mekhlis's demise seemed to be saying to the army, in terms not veiled to a Soviet citizen: "We have delivered you from the Jews who

were after your lives. Help us to supreme power, and we will see that you are rid of the Jews forever."

BUT, again, let us go back a little. After the first defeats at the hands of the invading Germans in 1941, it became once more necessary, as in 1926, to make concessions to the army. Mekhlis was relieved of his post and replaced by General (later Marshal) Shcherbakov, who was a very different sort of man. For one thing, he was the first Great Russian ever to serve as chief political commissar of the army; for another, he was entirely indifferent to party doctrine, friendly to the Orthodox Church, addicted to pre-Revolutionary military traditions, and—how could such a Russian not be?—a confirmed anti-Semite. Shcherbakov soon achieved the unique distinction of being co-opted into the Politburo, though he was not even a government minister. Under his guidance, the trend of official Red Army ideology was completely reversed, with non-party patriotism made the dominant note, and the old-style officers' hierarchy installed.

Malenkov seems to have cooperated with Shcherbakov to some extent, and there was a full understanding, apparently, between the latter and Marshal Zhukov, the darling of the Red Army. But both generals had their adversaries, who were of two camps: first, the old-line Communists, especially the secret police, who were biding their time and waiting for the end of the war; second, a group of high officers inside the army who disagreed with Zhukov and Shcherbakov over the political aspects of military strategy.

Shcherbakov had founded an official cult dedicated to Kutusov, the general who led the czar's armies to victory over Napoleon in 1812. Kutusov was a fierce xenophobe, but more important was the caution, the avoidance of unnecessary losses, that had characterized his generalship; moreover, he was known for his steadfast opposition to any war that involved fighting beyond the borders of the Holy Russian Fatherland. The faction in the Red Army's high command that disagreed with Shcherbakov and

Zhukov wanted to conquer large territories beyond Russia's confines, regardless of the cost in casualties. The most ardent spokesman of this position appears to have been Marshal Guvorov, Zhdanov's personal military adviser; but Marshal Vasilievsky, one of Molotov's closest friends, was its soberer and weightier advocate. In any event, it was on the basis of this disagreement in the Red Army's high command that Stalin, Zhdanov, Molotov, and Beria regained the upper hand over it after the war.

On May 11, 1945, three days after the close of hostilities, Shcherbakov suddenly died. Never did a death come more opportunely—for certain people. As in Mekhlis's case, threads lead directly from this event to the "doctors' plot" in January 1953, for the Jewish doctors also had confessed to murdering Shcherbakov. That he was indeed murdered is highly probable—but hardly as result of a "Zionist conspiracy": the finger of suspicion points to the usual quarter—Stalin. *Cui bono?* is never an unfair question when it comes to the crimes of Stalinist politics.

Those in the Kremlin who extorted the confessions from the nine doctors were making their first bid to the Red Army. Here they were prosecuting and bringing to "justice" the assassins of that army's most valiant spokesman, just as they were also to bring to "justice" its most execrated enemy, Mekhlis, by having him die. And the fact that Shcherbakov was now "revealed" to have been the victim of a "Zionist plot" implied unmistakably that the natural enemies of the Red Army command were always "the" Jews. *Whichever way we look at it, the new anti-Semitism in the Kremlin seemed at every point to involve a bid for army support.*

BUT why were the Jewish doctors forced to "confess" to the murder of Zhdanov as well? That he, too, had died at the moment most opportune for Stalin seems incontestable—had he not been implicated in Tito's break with the Kremlin, which had become final only a few weeks before Zhdanov died? And that the Kremlin's doctors

actually had a hand in this death is not implausible, though it is by no means certain either. What is certain is that if Zhdanov—and Shcherbakov—had indeed been murdered, the guilty party was Stalin. But whereas the tale of a Jewish plot against Shcherbakov might be expected to hold water in the eyes of the generals, could the same story be expected to hold water with respect to Zhdanov, the internationalist? At second glance, however, the logic becomes visible. The anti-Semitic faction in the Kremlin wanted to make a bid to the officers of the Guvorov and Vasilievsky faction as well as to those of Zhukov's—and what better way for the moment than by blaming "the" Jews for the murder of that faction's protector, too?

What was left out of the indictment of the nine doctors is no less significant than what was put in. One Shikin, an outspoken adherent of Zhdanov, was made head of the army's political department after Shcherbakov's death. He did not last long, being replaced shortly by General Bulganin, a close associate of Lazar Kaganovich (who was opposed to both Zhdanov and Malenkov). It was Bulganin who brought the Red Army back under the party's control, and it is significant that his name was not included in the list of military leaders supposedly marked for death by the "Jewish doctors' conspiracy." This would appear to mean that the engineers of the anti-Semitic campaign were, by implication, inviting the army to strike out against political interference. By omitting Bulganin's name, they seemed to be saying: "The Jews are out to kill the commanders of the army and navy, not interlopers like Bulganin, who are really civilians and party tools."

IT EMERGES that anti-Semitism as such was used by Malenkov as a weapon in his struggle with the party's left wing, and that the main object of the recent wave of official anti-Semitism inside the USSR proper was therefore to win the army's support against that left wing.

But why, having started his anti-Semitic

campaign back in 1948 as soon as he had won his place of power, hadn't Malenkov carried it through to its logical conclusion by a wholesale elimination of every Jew who held high office in the party? Also, why, after the long interlude of relative calm since his first anti-Semitic move back in 1948, was he now, in the second half of 1952, so eager for the army's support?

Malenkov was unable to go the whole hog against his opponents in the party—and against the Jews of the Soviet Union—because he failed in the end to get a secure enough hold on that supreme personal power which seemed to have fallen into his hands on Zhdanov's death. This failure was revealed in the purges consequent on Tito's defection. Without question, some genuine Zhdanovites in Russia and some authentic Titoists in the Balkans (Dimitrov in Bulgaria, Markos, the Greek guerrilla general, and Xoxe in Albania) were struck down. But the most sensational cases involved in the purging of the "Titoists" were Gomulka's in Poland, Kostov's in Bulgaria, and Rajk's in Hungary—and all three of these satellite leaders were loyal *anti-Titoists* of long standing. It was during this same period, the years 1949 and 1950, that Gottwald in Czechoslovakia, an anti-Titoist if there ever was one, had most reason to fear for his life. Somebody, somehow, had got hold of the whole anti-Titoist operation and turned it on the anti-Titoists themselves!

How was such a thing possible? I believe that the answer is relatively simple. Every time one of Stalin's heirs apparent thrust his head up above his fellows in the Politburo, the latter joined hands to pull him down. While Zhdanov was alive, Beria was one of his most determined opponents, and so was Bulganin. But after he died they both got together with Molotov, who until then had sided with Zhdanov, to form a "left" bloc in order to frustrate Malenkov's bid for supreme power. The hand of that bloc can be recognized in the treatment given the Zhdanovites in the satellite countries in the first years after Zhdanov's death. Slansky, Ana Pauker, Gerö in Hungary,

and others were not purged, but simply swallowed up by a new group of leaders, who continued the fight against Malenkov.

The Beria-Bulganin-Molotov bloc also succeeded in merging or coordinating apparatuses of Soviet power that had hitherto been separate and often in competition: the secret police (MGB), the foreign services, the army's political services, and the old Comintern. A sanguinary vengeance was wreaked in the "people's democracies," not on the Titoists, but on those who had taken the break with Tito for the signal to move against the left wings—and Jews—in their own local Communist parties. (Rajk, in particular, had been known as an anti-Semite.) Thus the anti-Semitic campaign that Malenkov had started in Russia in the fall of 1948 was arrested among the satellites, and soon scotched at home, too.

Eventually, Malenkov was again able to resort to anti-Semitism in his struggle for power. But this time he had to make a detour through Prague. It was easier to effect a bloody solution at the periphery of Soviet power than at the center.

WHEN it attacked Slansky and his fellows, Malenkov's anti-Semitic faction was aiming at its enemies in Moscow, Molotov and Beria. It was these two who were to be got at ultimately by the charge of Zionist and American espionage. Within the framework of the life-and-death struggle between Malenkov and the "left" bloc—a struggle still going on—no humbler victims would do. The fierce attack by insinuation on the Soviet security services that broke out in the Russian press immediately after the announcement of the "doctors' plot" bears out this supposition.

It would appear that Malenkov chose anti-Semitism in his attack on Beria and Molotov because he had no other weapon available. His feud with them had become a naked struggle for power in which larger issues no longer counted, and resort had to be taken to more inflammatory and personal ones—like anti-Semitism. But because Malenkov aimed at the very lives of his opponents

in the party he put his own life in jeopardy.

Every time in the past that a younger man had risen to prominence in the party Stalin had at first supported him, next had pulled wires to form a bloc against him, had then maneuvered him into compromising himself by extreme courses, and in the end had had him killed off. Kirov in the 30's and Zhdanov in the 40's had both met the same fate. While Stalin still lived Malenkov had reason to fear that his fate would be like theirs, and he must have felt compelled, especially during this last year, to move fast. The Beria-Molotov faction was mobilizing to knock him down—with Stalin's help possibly. An open, desperate appeal for the army's support could no longer be delayed; he might soon lose his power to stage "plots." And so he played his last card.

The "doctors' plot" was part of that card, the main part—but it was also something more, more even than anti-Semitism. And more than a move against the "left" bloc alone (now reinforced by Khrushchev, possibly the most up-and-coming of all the Soviet bosses). It was a move against Stalin.

Three of the doctors named in the "plot"—Yegorov, Vinogradov, and Mayorov—were not Jews. These were the three who had signed most of the death certificates of the Soviet leaders who died in the past, and the first two were known to be Stalin's personal, private physicians. The signatures appended to the official bulletins on the progress of Stalin's last sickness were those of doctors entirely new to the Kremlin, the name of not a single one of the old Kremlin medical staff appearing. That whole staff, obviously, had been incarcerated, and it included more than those doctors actually named in the "plot." As we now know, fifteen Kremlin doctors, not merely the nine originally named, had been arrested. And the whole frame-up, beyond being a blow at Beria and Bulganin, an anti-Semitic provocation, and a bid for the army's support, had also, as it turned out, been a move to eliminate the medical staff that had in the past so faithfully liquidated troublesome Politburo members on Stalin's order, all the while that it

had guarded his own health. Obviously, Malenkov had reason to fear that he too might one day become a victim of that medical execution squad. After all, Stalin was then still alive.

MALENKOV'S diabolical frame-up technique—worthy of his mentor and late master as technique alone—and his anti-Semitism have, as is plain by now, availed him nothing. Rarely has political crime been so immediately unrewarding. With Stalin's death, anti-Semitism vanished completely from the Soviet press. It became evident that the army had refused to fall for the "doctors' plot." Nor did Malenkov have any better success with his attacks on the secret police.

But besides having to renounce his dream of succeeding to Stalin's full powers, he had also to accept the abolition of important organizational changes that had cost him years of struggle to put through. The Politburo reappeared under a new name, with the control of large and powerful administrative departments restored to its members. Back in the fall of 1948, under Malenkov's own prompting, these departments had been taken away from the direct supervision of the Politburo and split up.

A few days later in March, Malenkov even had to give up his exclusive possession of the party Secretariat. The upshot was that his rivals got back everything they had lost, while he was the only one to lose powers held before. The key man in the new setup is indisputably Beria, and speculation that he and Malenkov may be allies is refuted by the simple and obvious fact that Beria owes the new strength he now has to the wiping out of every organizational change Malenkov had effected since 1948.

The news from behind the Iron Curtain since the first few days after Stalin's unlamented death reveals an unbroken succession of defeats for Malenkov. A week after Stalin's funeral in Moscow, Klement Gottwald, spearhead of the whole anti-Semitic campaign and the man whose Jew-baiting had cleared the way for Malenkov's, was

dead. He had returned from the funeral in the best of health—but accompanied by two of Beria's finest doctors—and had reviewed a parade the day after his arrival in Prague. Then, three days later, he succumbed to pneumonia. Such a quick death is very unusual in the case of pneumonia, and the Czech doctors who did the post-mortem on Gottwald's body refused to confirm the diagnosis; in their communiqué they, in fact, specifically denied that pneumonia had been the cause of death, and diagnosed it as "arteriosclerosis" instead.

Then, at the end of March, came the official repudiation of the "doctors' plot," with the arrest of the prosecutor and the dismissal from office of his superior, both of them Malenkov henchmen. This probably bodes more ill for Malenkov than any of the other reverses he has recently suffered. Beria seems to be taking his revenge step by step. Still, it would be a mistake to regard the repudiation of the "doctors' plot" as having exclusively to do with the struggle for power at the summit of the Soviet hierarchy. It probably betokens something more.

That more was revealed in the new peace campaign launched, not only at the bidding of Malenkov personally, but with the support of the whole Soviet government—and with Malenkov's name getting less and less prominence in the whole business. This new tactic—for tactic is what it is—was originally sponsored by Stalin and Malenkov, before and during the recent 19th Congress of the Russian Communist party, against Molotov's ill-concealed opposition. But if Malenkov is so weak that his anti-Semitic program could be shelved, as it has been, how does it happen that his peace campaign is being continued—nay more, speeded up? The answer would be that this isn't the first time in the history of Stalinist Russia that the chief advocate of a certain policy was pushed to the wall and prepared for liquidation while his policy was being hurriedly put into effect and even carried to an extreme.

A RATHER obvious motive that might be suggested for the peace campaign may be

the desperate need for external calm of a new regime being shaken to its depths by internal strife. But this explanation really accounts for little, since the Soviet rulers themselves know that they are not now threatened by Western aggression, and that America will not in the foreseeable future be tempted to start a war by a moment of temporary weakness on their part. (They are better posted on this than millions of liberals in the West.) Just as little as the cessation of the anti-Semitic campaign, can the high-pressure methods of the new peace campaign be explained solely by the stresses of the inner party struggle.

On the other hand, the peace campaign and the abandonment of official anti-Semitism do seem to be connected with the amnesty proclaimed on March 27 by the Soviet regime. Although, according to the official text, political prisoners have been expressly excluded from its benefits, an inherent momentum seems to be carrying developments beyond the intentions of those initiating them.

A new and powerful current seems to be at work in the Soviet Union, and its origin may have to be sought in the non-party areas of Soviet life, among the generals and industrial managers whose silent pressure has been so strong yet inarticulate a factor in every intra-party struggle. Now that the Communist party structure in the USSR seems in danger of crumbling at the top, these generals and managers may have become emboldened to present demands and try to strike bargains in return for their support (perhaps through the mediation of Marshal Zhukov or some other personality, unknown to the West). Thus it may be the managerial and military interests that are responsible for the relaxation, such as it is, of the terror and for the hectic pace of the peace campaign.

And since, during the last phase of reign by total terror, anti-Semitism had become a prominent feature of official party policy, may this same upper section of Soviet society not have a real interest in also seeing that the anti-Semitic program is called off—

though for reasons other than Beria's and Molotov's? Today the recent anti-Semitism campaign in Soviet Russia is being washed away by a great groundswell.*

BUT it would be a great mistake to be undilutedly optimistic about the future of anti-Semitism in Russia. The recent dramatic change of line betokens no real change of heart on any bureaucrat's part. It is the exceptional Soviet ruler who does not down at bottom fear and hate the invincibly critical Jewish spirit.

Simply because Malenkov was using anti-Semitism to point a pistol at their heads, his rivals had, for the sake of self-preservation, to put a stop to it. But the basic attitude of the managerial and other upper-class elements in Russia is still more or less anti-Semitic—after all, it was by appealing to their anti-Semitism that Malenkov had hoped to win their support. And if the army generals refused to respond favorably (and thereby gave Malenkov his decisive defeat) it was mostly for tactical reasons and because they wanted, before anything else, to break a few links in the system of totalitarian rule that was suffocating them. Once this class feel reasonably free of the terror, there can be little doubt that anti-Semitism will again become a public issue in Russia.

If the methods of the Soviet regime are actually transformed, Jews will doubtless share in the benefits. But the future may also see a new repudiation of the equality that the 1917 revolution originally bestowed on the Jews of Russia, and that country may return to something like the anti-Semitic discrimination practiced under the czars. But, of course, this depends on whether the generals and managers increase their power.

But whichever way it turns out, Russia will remain for some time to come a backward country with a fund of barbarism not yet exhausted—as the lurid, grotesque, and bloody intrigues I have just tried to explain would show.

*Belated ripples of anti-Semitism are still being felt in some of the satellite countries—especially in Rumania, under the Georgiu-Dej clique.